Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

10 May 2017

Original: English

First session
Vienna, 2-12 May 2017

Nuclear disarmament in context: a global governance issue

Working paper submitted by Ireland

Introduction

1. Security concerns and the security environment have been a recurring theme in our discussions at the 2017 Preparatory Committee, but when we speak of security, especially when it comes to weapons that respect no boundaries and that, if detonated, would spread their toxic poison through the air, to damage human, animal and plant life across continents, as well as pollute our water and soil, with the potential to cause famine and change our weather for a decade or more, it is also important to adjust the perspective from the national, the regional, the and the international and to take a truly global view of the risk that is integral to these weapons. In the digital age, we face threats hitherto considered unlikely. In recent times, the vulnerability of cyberinfrastructure, both civilian and military, has been challenged and compromised. We have, in recent times, witnessed the acceleration of missile programmes in certain countries, enabled through illicit procurement, intangible technology transfer and, perhaps, through cyberespionage. As reported in the recent important paper by the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) on understanding nuclear weapons risk, we live in an age where cybertechnologies are in the grasp of most States, regardless of their economic capacities, as well as non-State actors. This levels the strategic playing field and creates hitherto unparalleled opportunities for small belligerent governments or terrorist groups to instigate high-impact attacks. This heightens the risk, not only of an unintended nuclear detonation but also of the determinative impact that the manipulation of data may have in decision-making. To be consistent and effective, our focus must be on the weapon and the impact of the weapon, not on the actor, and we bring this approach to our work on all weapons issues. We endorse the former Secretary-General's view that there are no right hands for the wrong weapons. Given all the risk factors, our vigilance and efforts on disarmament and non-proliferation are needed now more than ever. In this regard, Ireland is pleased to introduce the present new working paper on how our work in the review cycle of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons should be undertaken in context, not just the security context but also the wider, global risk and global governance context, mentioned by many delegates, for example, in terms of poverty, development,

Please recycle

climate, environment, health, cultural heritage and gender equality. The new working paper, an updated version of which has been made available in brochure form for delegates, is based on Ireland's collaborative research with Chatham House since 2015. We hope that this research and the working paper will re-energize our efforts throughout this review cycle, and we look forward to consultation on this issue and the development of the various strands.

2. This is a time of global uncertainty and challenge. The existence of nuclear weapons does nothing to protect or to make the world a safer place in such tense and sensitive circumstances; in fact, the inherent risks of nuclear weapons make the world even more dangerous. The only actions that can truly address the risk are the prohibition and elimination of nuclear weapons. However, given that this is likely to take some time to achieve, mitigation against current risk levels must be put in place as a matter of urgency. The risk of a nuclear detonation, either by accident or on purpose, is higher now than ever. Indefinite retention means inevitable catastrophe. The longer nuclear weapons remain and the more complacency there is about them, the more likely it is that an accident will occur. While we value all efforts at enhanced nuclear safety and welcome moves towards risk reduction and greater transparency, we believe that it is important to underline that addressing the risks should not serve to suggest any support for the indefinite retention of the root cause. Every day that nuclear weapons continue to exist is a day in which they could potentially be detonated, either accidently or on purpose, or be accessed by terrorists. Regrettably, the low level of effort being invested in nuclear disarmament remains in stark contrast to the urgency surrounding this heightened level of risk.

3. A particular risk that Ireland wishes to highlight is in the area of the growing automation of weapon systems, an issue that is currently the subject of considerable attention in the conventional weapons field. In view of the evidence indicating that many accidental nuclear weapon detonations were avoided in the past owing largely to human agency and intervention, this is an area of increased risk that needs to be highlighted with regard to the continued reliance on nuclear weapons in security doctrines. An important and integral part of our work as States parties to the Treaty should be in the area of increasing awareness. In this respect, Ireland has been particularly active with regard to raising awareness of the disproportionate gendered impact of ionizing radiation. Ireland believes it is vitally important to continue raising awareness and contributing to knowledge about this hitherto little-appreciated aspect of nuclear weapons use. (This aspect of these weapons needs greater visibility, and Ireland has submitted a dedicated working paper on this issue.)

4. Rising international tensions entail the very real potential for escalation, coupled with the possibilities of accidents and miscalculations. In addition, we see the increasing prominence of nuclear weapons in security doctrines and ongoing significant investment in modernization, much of which would have the effect of making it easier to use nuclear weapons. Against such a backdrop, action on nuclear disarmament is both timely and pressing. 2015 saw ground-breaking international agreements, one on the Sustainable Development Goals and one on climate, examples of what is possible when we work together, face reality and focus on the future. But those agreements exist under the shadow of a potential nuclear detonation, which puts their success at risk. This is a small planet, and our concept of the world as a vast and unconnected place has shifted to one where everything is interlinked. In such a world, multilateralism plays a key role and questions of security have an impact, not just nationally but on us all. Therefore, in terms of the sustainability of our planet and collective human security, there has never been a greater need for more collaborative thinking and global governance. Good progress was made with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on

climate change. But these agreements are overshadowed by the lack of progress on nuclear disarmament and all of their objectives are threatened by the risks associated with the continued existence of and reliance on nuclear arsenals.

5. In this context, nuclear disarmament and our work in the Non-Proliferation Treaty review cycle is not a side issue; it is not a technical or specialist debate and it should not be addressed as such. This issue is, in fact, an integral and horizontal one that has the potential to have an impact on all citizens and that therefore needs to be integrated with policymaking in all other areas that have a global impact. Whatever the issue that concerns us, be it migration or food security, cyberterrorism or global warming, human rights or gender equality, the potential negative impact is heightened by the complicating factor of nuclear weapons. This is no time for business as usual; this is a time for informed concern and for collective action. With all of this in mind and in order to contribute substantively to this review cycle, Ireland has been pleased to commission an updated consultation paper from Chatham House, setting out how nuclear disarmament is essentially the missing piece in the global governance jigsaw and why and how this must be addressed now.

6. The key points that we would wish to highlight from that research are set out below.

7. The paper presents nuclear disarmament as a fundamentally interconnected issue. This is a time of great challenge, on the global stage, for nations and for all of humanity. It is therefore a time for leadership and a time to accept our international obligations, our commitments and our responsibilities. Nuclear disarmament must be viewed in a global context and, if we are genuinely concerned about the sustainability of the planet, then we need to be equally concerned about nuclear issues. Therefore, the commitments we make under other international agreements also have an impact on the commitments we must make, and must fulfil, regarding nuclear disarmament.

8. It is time to understand nuclear disarmament as a horizontal issue, recognizing its impacts on broader rights and entitlements, as well as on obligations and responsibility. We need to generate informed public concern, which in turn will serve to drive the necessary political will. More collaborative multilateralism, which includes a greater understanding of the comprehensive and interconnected nature of our international obligations and how nuclear disarmament is inextricably linked, will lead ultimately to this being rightly treated as a horizontal, top-table, global governance issue.

9. The paper sets out the ways in which nuclear weapons would have disastrous impacts on a whole set of issues in which the possibility of nuclear weapons use is not currently discussed or factored into policymaking. These top-table issues include: the Sustainable Development Goals, climate change, the environment, development, gender equality, children's rights, the protection of cultural heritage, public health, non-State armed groups, humanitarian action and cybersecurity.

10. The paper makes the case that those who are concerned about the survivability of the planet and the betterment of humanity need to be equally concerned about nuclear weapons. The international commitments and obligations that countries have made on those top-table issues need to be explicitly linked to the international commitments and obligations on nuclear weapons and the lack of action on the same. Leaving nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation obligations unfulfilled will have a severe impact on all the efforts under way to address climate and environmental issues, the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and other measures.

11. The paper reaches a number of important conclusions that should resonate beyond this review cycle and into the wider policy arena. These include: connecting expert and diplomatic communities across the range of issues to yield new perspectives, synergies and practical ideas; following through on the links between disarmament and development; recognizing the vital role of women in disarmament; acting on the connection between nuclear disarmament and the protection of cultural heritage; renewing action between the nuclear disarmament community and public health experts; joining the dots between nuclear disarmament and nuclear safety; exposing the cybervulnerabilities not just of civilian nuclear material but that in material use; and using the World Humanitarian Summit as a model of how nuclear disarmament can take its place among the most significant global challenges of our time.

12. The paper suggests that progress, or the lack of it, on nuclear disarmament should be factored into monitoring progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, that experts and officials working on global threats would benefit from including nuclear disarmament in their perspective and that all of these issues should be taken forward by the United Nations in a cross-sectoral approach, including joint studies, working papers, meetings and exchanges of knowledge between relevant committees.

13. The paper also proposes that the vulnerabilities and risks associated with nuclear weapons be taken into account in all security and emergency planning and that a response to a nuclear detonation should be included in all risk management and mitigation processes, as well as in recommending an examination of the capacity for a humanitarian response to such a nuclear detonation and noting the particular responsibility of the nuclear weapon States and those who have nuclear weapons on their territory, in this regard.

14. Fundamentally, the research that we have commissioned supports Ireland's view that nuclear disarmament can be truly characterized as the missing link in multilateralism. Ireland hopes that delegates will share our view, supported by the research paper, on the need for an enhanced awareness of the interconnected nature of our nuclear disarmament work and the importance of elevating this to the highest levels of our global governance, so that our Non-Proliferation Treaty commitments are reviewed in the necessary global context. We would like to see this proposition discussed further in the course of the review cycle and reflected in the outcome document.

NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/WP.38

Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

10 May 2017

Original: English

First session
Vienna, 2-12 May 2017

Gender, development and nuclear weapons

Working paper submitted by Ireland

Background

1. In the preamble to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, the States parties to the Treaty, in its first paragraph, consider "the devastation that would be visited upon all mankind by a nuclear war and the consequent need to make every effort to avert the danger of such a war and to take measures to safeguard the security of peoples". When the States parties agreed in 1995 to the indefinite extension of the Treaty, the decision on principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament included a reaffirmation of the preamble and provisions of the Treaty. The strengthened review process agreed to in 2000 included, in the 13 practical steps, the provision of regular reports in respect of the implementation of article VI. The 2010 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons expressed "its deep concern at the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and reaffirms the need for all States at all times to comply with applicable international law, including international humanitarian law".

2. This clear and reiterated humanitarian impetus for the Treaty was reinforced by the terms of the 1996 advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice with regard to the legality of threat or use of nuclear weapons, which observed that:

> The destructive power of nuclear weapons cannot be contained in either space or time. They have the potential to destroy all civilization and the entire ecosystem of the planet
>
> . . .
>
> in order correctly to apply to the present case the Charter law on the use of force and the law applicable in armed conflict, in particular humanitarian law, it is imperative for [the Court] to take account of the unique characteristics of nuclear weapons, and in particular their destructive capacity, their capacity to cause untold human suffering, and their ability to cause damage to generations to come.

The advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice in this matter is also recalled in the 13 practical steps adopted at the 2000 Review Conference.

17-07524 (E) 110517

Please recycle

3. Ireland has engaged with determination and commitment in the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process and does so again on this occasion. We believe firmly in the humanitarian impetus behind the Treaty and its commitment to nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We have therefore welcomed the renewed impetus and focus, since the adoption of the 2010 outcome document, on the humanitarian impact of nuclear weapons, in particular the new information that has been made available with regard to the serious and imminent risks and catastrophic consequences of any nuclear weapons detonation. The three conferences held between 2013 and 2014 in Oslo, Nayarit, Mexico, and Vienna, as well as the work presented at the 2013 and 2016 open-ended working groups, have shown clearly that nuclear disarmament in accordance with article VI is urgent and necessary.

4. Ireland is participating in the current United Nations-mandated multilateral treaty negotiations in New York on a new legal instrument to prohibit nuclear weapons, leading to their total elimination. As a non-nuclear-weapon State, we believe that every opportunity to seek progress in nuclear disarmament must be seized. Our view is that the new treaty will strengthen and reinforce the disarmament provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, and we encourage all States parties to the Treaty and all States Members of the United Nations to join us in these efforts. Equally, we trust that this review cycle and its outcome will also provide a stimulus for action. The Treaty is not a charter for the indefinite retention of nuclear weapons, and the heightened regional and international tensions we are currently witnessing make the case for action on multilateral nuclear disarmament even more urgent than before.

Gender and nuclear weapons

5. In the present working paper, Ireland wishes to highlight one particular issue that the work of the humanitarian initiative with regard to nuclear weapons has brought to light in recent years. This is the question of gender and nuclear weapons, both in relation to the gendered impacts of nuclear weapons and from the viewpoint of women's participation in nuclear disarmament negotiating forums. The present paper is supported by the research conducted by the International Law and Policy Institute and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research and set out in their paper entitled "Gender, development and nuclear weapons.[1] It was first presented during a side event of the First Committee of the General Assembly in October 2016. The United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, Sweden and Ireland will relaunch it during this Preparatory Committee.

6. With regard to the question of the gendered impact of nuclear weapons, our original inspiration for this work comes from the presentation made by Mary Olson, of the Nuclear Information and Resource Service, to the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons in December 2014.[2] In this work, and in a subsequent presentation made at a side event of the 2015 Review Conference, Ms Olson demonstrates the clear scientific evidence showing that ionizing radiation does not affect men and women equally. A paper by A.G Dimmen on gendered impacts, prepared by the International Law and Policy Institute and the United

[1] International Law and Policy Institute and United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research, "Gender, development and nuclear weapons: shared goals, shared concerns" (2016), joint paper presented at the General Assembly, October 2016. Available from www.unidir.org/files/publications/pdfs/gender-development-and-nuclear-weapons-en-659.pdf.

[2] Mary Olson, 'Nuclear: war of human consequences", paper for presentation given to the Vienna Conference on the Humanitarian Impact of Nuclear Weapons, Nuclear Information and Resource Service (December 2014), p. 34. Available from www.nirs.org/international/olsontalkvienna12414.pdf.

Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for the Vienna Conference, has also highlighted this important topic.[3] While the detonation of one or more nuclear weapons would cause death on a massive scale and injury to all, the evidence is clear that, over the longer term, of those who are exposed to ionizing radiation from such a detonation, women and girls have a far higher risk of developing cancer than men or boys. Whatever the ultimate biological cause for this greater susceptibility, the evidence is unambiguous. In a longitudinal study of survivors of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the risk of developing and dying from cancer due to ionizing radiation was almost twice as high for women as for men.

7. Ireland considers that this serious humanitarian aspect of nuclear weapons risk is one that the Non-Proliferation Treaty review process has not given sufficient consideration to up to now. With the research now available and the strong evidence that detonation of these weapons causes far greater harm to the health of women and girls than to men and boys, we must approach our commitments to the disarmament of nuclear weapons with due regard also to our commitments, under humanitarian law, to sustainable development, gender equality and our commitments under the women and peace and security agenda. We cannot continue to maintain, modernize and improve weapons that are now known beyond any scientific doubt to have disproportionate gendered impacts on women.

8. For this reason, Ireland considers that the significant humanitarian question of the disproportionate effect of a nuclear weapons detonation on women and girls must be reflected in the outcome document of this Non-Proliferation Treaty review cycle. This is a significant aspect of any nuclear weapons detonation, one deserving of far greater attention from States parties to the Treaty than has been the case up to now.

Women's participation in negotiations on nuclear weapons

9. Ireland also wishes to use the opportunity of the present working paper to highlight another aspect of gender and nuclear weapons: the question of women's participation in negotiating forums. This is particularly important in nuclear disarmament where the International Law and Policy Institute-United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research paper shows clearly that women continue to be seriously underrepresented in nuclear disarmament work, including at meetings of the First Committee and at Non-Proliferation Treaty review meetings. The disparity is even worse if we study groups of governmental experts working on nuclear disarmament-related matters.

10. Ireland has committed strongly to a gender perspective in its disarmament work. A focus on gender equality has been a cross-cutting issue for Ireland's foreign policy, in line with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), for many years. This is particularly reflected in our work on human rights, conflict prevention and post-conflict rehabilitation, as well as our work to promote sustainable development. In 2015, our second national action plan on women, peace and security, following a wide public consultation process, included for the first time specific commitments to support the inclusion of a gender perspective and women's effective participation in disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control.

11. Ireland considers this matter to be of key importance for its work in the Treaty context. This is, in the first instance, from the principle of fairness, that women

[3] Anne Guro Dimmen "Gendered impacts: the humanitarian impacts of nuclear weapons from a gender perspective", paper No. 5 of 6, presented at the International Law and Policy Institute-United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research conference series. Available from http://ilpi.org/publications/gendered-impacts-the-humanitarian-impacts-of-nuclear-weapons-from-a-gender-perspective/.

should be equally engaged in discussions on weapons that affect them so disproportionately, both biologically and also taking into account the wider gendered impacts of conflict, which are also addressed in the International Law and Policy Institute-United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research paper. These broader questions of displacement, discrimination and social stigma are also important in this context.

12. Recognizing that the underlying trend for women's engagement in disarmament forums is improving, although slowly, Ireland would encourage States who can do so to assist and sponsor qualified women participants in nuclear disarmament forums and to take gender diversity into account in the composition of their delegations.

13. Studies show that diversity and differing perspectives make group prediction and problem-solving more effective. Almost 50 years after the adoption of the Treaty, and with a failure to agree on an outcome document in 2015, this review cycle offers us an opportunity for more effective discussions and outcomes. A conscious and genuine commitment to improving women's engagement and participation in the work of the Treaty would be a good place to start.

Conclusion: gender, development and nuclear weapons

14. In September 2015, Heads of State and Government adopted an agenda for sustainable development that was nothing less than a promise to humanity. As we begin this Non-Proliferation Treaty review cycle, we must keep in mind the threat posed by nuclear weapons to these global goals and aspirations, which we all share. Any nuclear weapons detonation, whether accidental or deliberate, would have a significant impact on development, gender equality, health, the protection of cultural heritage and the environment. A more wide-scale event, such as a so called "limited nuclear exchange", would wreak devastation for generations. In this working paper, Ireland has sought to bring attention to the gendered impact of nuclear weapons and to the need to increase women's participation in nuclear disarmament negotiations. But we are also cognizant of the wider developmental and environmental concerns that nuclear weapons pose for our ever more fragile planet.

15. The drafters who framed the Treaty did so in the shadow of the first use of nuclear weapons in warfare and with a strong sense of the danger the continuing existence and proliferation of these weapons posed for "all mankind". Almost 50 years after the adoption of the Treaty, and with a view to the twenty-fifth anniversary of its extension in 2020, Ireland looks forward to working with States parties to the Treaty so that progress on the questions raised in the present paper can be achieved

NPT/CONF.2020/PC.I/WP.39

Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

16 May 2017

Original: English

First session
Vienna, 2-12 May 2017

Common interests of parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

Working paper submitted by United States of America

1. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons was opened for signature on 1 July 1968 and entered into force on 5 March 1970. The fiftieth anniversaries of these milestones take place during the five-year cycle leading to the tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty, to be held in 2020. These anniversaries provide an opportunity for all parties to the Treaty to reflect on the benefits they have derived from the Treaty over nearly half a century, and how they can work together to sustain and expand those benefits over coming years and decades.

2. The core provisions of the Treaty are those that deal with non-proliferation (articles I-III), peaceful uses of nuclear energy (article IV) and disarmament (article VI). These are sometimes mistakenly portrayed as competing interests, and the "bargain" of the Treaty as a collection of trade-offs among these supposedly competing interests. Such descriptions are oversimplified and misleading, and fundamentally misrepresent the structure and benefits of the Treaty. In fact, these elements are not in tension, and represent shared interests of all parties to the Treaty.

- All parties to the Treaty — nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States alike — benefit from a strong nuclear non-proliferation regime. This includes the direct security benefit of knowing, and having international safeguards in place to verify, that their neighbours or rivals do not have, and cannot readily acquire, nuclear weapons. These mutual undertakings against the further spread of nuclear weapons depend on the undertaking by nuclear-weapon States not to help that spread.
- These security undertakings at the heart of the Treaty benefit all parties thereto, and have made possible the Treaty's many contributions to international peace, security and development. Fundamentally, as its name suggests, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons is a treaty about non-proliferation. Neither meaningful international nuclear cooperation nor disarmament could succeed in the absence of strong non-proliferation

17-07674 (E) 190517

Please recycle

guarantees to ensure against the misuse of nuclear technology for weapons purposes; non-proliferation is the sine qua non for the Treaty's other elements.

- The maintenance of a strong non-proliferation regime benefits non-nuclear-weapon States, and indeed all parties to the Treaty, by facilitating sharing of the benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear energy. All parties to the Treaty benefit from the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, science and technology in helping meet sustainable development needs in areas as diverse as energy, health, agriculture, industry and natural resource management. Parties to the Treaty have a strong non-proliferation regime to thank for these benefits, because non-proliferation assurances facilitate nuclear-related cooperation by providing confidence that cooperation in these areas will not be misused or diverted.

- The maintenance of a strong non-proliferation regime also benefits non-nuclear-weapon States, and indeed all parties, by helping create conditions that might permit nuclear disarmament. Any further proliferation of nuclear weapons would sharply reduce the prospects for disarmament, and would increase the risks of nuclear war, the likelihood of nuclear escalation, miscalculation or accident, and the chances that non-State actors such as international terrorists might themselves acquire nuclear weapons. The non-proliferation regime is thus essential to reducing nuclear risks and enhancing stability. Disarmament would be unimaginable without strong non-proliferation guarantees.

3. The record in advancing these shared interests and goals over the past 50 years is impressive. In 1963, President John F. Kennedy warned of the prospect that as many as 25 countries might be on the path to acquiring nuclear weapons by the end of the 1970s alone. At various times, in fact, States in every region of the world have considered developing nuclear weapons. Such widespread proliferation would have greatly increased the risk that regional conflict could escalate to nuclear war, and would have greatly increased the risks of an accident or terrorist acquisition of such weapons. Yet this cascade of proliferation has not happened.

4. Instead, global non-proliferation efforts based on the Treaty have limited the number of States that possess nuclear weapons, a number that remains fewer than 10 — an extraordinarily small increase beyond the five nuclear-weapon States recognized in accordance with article IX.3 of the Treaty. Adherence to the Treaty has also become nearly universal. Almost all States have become parties to the Treaty, including many that once had nuclear weapons, or programmes and ambitions to develop nuclear weapons. Several cases of non-compliance with the Treaty and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards obligations have been resolved, although others remain unresolved. In response to these challenges, parties to the Treaty have put in place measures to strengthen IAEA safeguards, to update export control guidelines and to address other gaps in the non-proliferation regime. While the record is not perfect, and the Treaty is under stress today from unresolved proliferation challenges, the benefits of the global non-proliferation regime for international peace, security and development are undeniable, and the Treaty has proven to be indispensable in achieving them.

5. There has also been great progress in expanding the peaceful uses of nuclear energy over these 50 years. The membership of the IAEA has expanded to 168 countries, most of which are benefiting from its programmes to diagnose and fight diseases, develop new crops, manage scarce water resources and broadly apply nuclear science and technology to meet Sustainable Development Goals. The United States of America has contributed over $276 million since 2010 to IAEA programmes in these areas. Nuclear commerce is also thriving, with nearly 450

nuclear power reactors in operation providing over 390 gigawatts of clean, baseline electric capacity worldwide. And the commercial market for nuclear fuel, which remains highly reliable, is now backed up by several new and emerging fuel reserve and fuel assurance mechanisms through the IAEA, as well as the American assured fuel supply, currently operating in the United States. These assurance mechanisms would be available in the event of a serious disruption in market supply. Collective efforts to uphold and strengthen the global nuclear non-proliferation regime have helped build confidence between recipients and suppliers that is necessary for such commerce to thrive. Nuclear safety and security measures, overseen by an independent regulatory authority, along with international instruments that define a common legal framework, are also essential factors that enable peaceful nuclear cooperation to thrive. The United States has provided extensive assistance, bilaterally and multilaterally, to help develop standards and guidance and build national infrastructures, including approximately $124 million to IAEA programmes in nuclear safety and security since 2010.

6. Similarly, there has been remarkable progress in reducing nuclear risks and on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament. The cold war nuclear arms race ended decades ago. United States nuclear stockpiles have fallen by over 85 per cent from their peak during the cold war, and, under the Treaty between the United States of America and the Russian Federation on Measures for the Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms, the number of operationally deployed strategic warheads will fall to levels not seen since the 1950s. The United States has removed hundreds of tons of fissile material from weapons programmes and worked closely with the Russian Federation on the security and disposition of its excess fissile material.

7. This is not to say that there are no problems, of course, since some States are acting in ways that make further progress in controlling arms race behaviour and reducing nuclear-weapon risks more difficult. As recognized in the preamble of the Treaty — which ties disarmament to the lessening of international tension and the strengthening of trust among States — hopes for further reductions in nuclear risks depend in crucial ways not just upon the maintenance of strong non-proliferation guarantees, but also upon how the international community handles the various security challenges that confront its members. If the international community cannot effectively respond to regional aggression, ensure compliance with existing arms control and disarmament obligations, and manage or resolve inter-State rivalries and competition, further negotiated reductions will be more difficult. Those countries that are increasing their nuclear stockpiles, pursuing destabilizing strategic systems, violating their non-proliferation and disarmament obligations or taking other actions that increase international tensions and instability are making it increasingly difficult to build and sustain the security conditions that might make further disarmament possible.

8. On the whole, however, the Treaty's record is an impressive one, demonstrating how essential the global non-proliferation regime is to international peace, security and development. This long record of progress on all areas of the implementation of the Treaty was achieved only through a consensus-based process that respects the interests of all parties to the Treaty. Consensus-based deliberations are essential for States to be willing to address issues that affect their core interests. Consensus-based decision-making is also well suited to the subject matter of the Treaty, where there are so many common, overlapping and interrelated interests. Consensus has yielded far more successes over the past 50 years than disappointments and can do so again. Criticisms of consensus often emphasize the polarized disputes that have sometimes prevented agreement, but abandoning consensus will only increase that polarization.

9. The United States stands ready to work with other parties to the Treaty to ensure that the upcoming Review Conference in 2020 puts us on a constructive path that yields progress in advancing our common interests. Such a path would focus on practical responses to real-world problems, such as the threat to international peace and security from the proscribed nuclear programme of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, rather than on proposals that ignore such real-world conditions, ignore proliferation challenges or excuse or enable proliferation. The best way to achieve the Treaty's promise is not to abandon consensus but to embrace it, to reject the false divisions that misrepresent the provisions of the Treaty as competing interests, and to focus instead on the broad areas of common interest that should unite all parties to the Treaty.